643 person of one vassal. This simplifies the administration con-
631 siderably. Often, however, the vassal is vested with the tenure
423 of the mountain and the Bahutu who live there as his bondsmen, but he does not receive at the same time all the privileges; another Mutussi may receive the war fief on the same mountain, i.e., he may have the duty of assembling the local men in case of war, or a third Mutussi on this mountain may be in charge of dividing up the grazing land, etc. [90] The object and result of this organization is to make each of the holders of these privileges jealously watch over the others and to insure that the king keeps the reins of power firmly in his hands.

634 The mutwale who has been vested with a fief is, however,
614 the ruler of the Bahutu and Batwa in his feudal domain. He determines the work load of his people and has jurisdiction over ordinary affairs. However, the position of the people under him is not at all like slavery. They enjoy a considerable amount of freedom and are entitled to certain privileges. In addition
[628] they always have as support their kin group, their clan, which can be depended upon to take secret, bloody revenge for any real acts of violence on the part of the batwale or any other person. It is a kind of Vehmic organization which is respected even by the most powerful Batussi batwale. Also, each Muhutu is entitled to leave his feudal lord if the latter maltreats him and to look for a new master. However, since the reputation
[554] and wealth of each Mutussi depends chiefly on how many people he has, it is in his own interests to see to it that his people do not leave him as a result of maltreatment.

662 The king always surrounds the high vassals and batwale with spies in order not to allow them to become too independent. Beyond that, however, jealousy and envy are powerful motives for each mutwale to exercise a check on his neighbor. Naturally intrigue and incrimination are widespread. If a case of dis-
687 loyalty or high treason is reported to the king and is discovered to be well-founded, royal justice acts quickly with spear and poison. Nevertheless, several grand batwale have managed to
631 attain a large degree of independence in the course of time. This is particularly true of those living in the exposed border

643 series of such kings in Urundi. If the king is a weakling, if he
631 lacks the cunning and the capacity for violence and cruelty to inspire fear, which are the necessary characteristics of African rulers -- as, for example, the present weak King Mutaga -- his absolutism is mere show. Then the real rulers are the heads of the royal family, the Baganwa or Abaganwa, who make the royal puppet dance to their tune. These, then, are times when the various provincial governors make themselves independent, when other parts of the country fall under the rule of foreign neighboring sultans (for example, Ujogoma temporarily under Ussuwi), and when anarchy more or less prevails in the entire realm. Concerning the development of these conditions and the present state of affairs, see the chapter, "History," p. 151 ff. [not translated].

643 The present impotence of the monarchy, the weakening
648 of central power, and the disruption of the formerly powerful unified realm have been sanctioned by the German colonial government to its own advantage. At the same time the colonial government is attempting to replace gradually the supreme power of the king with the rule of the German Resident. It cannot eliminate the monarchy as such unless it is prepared to take up the fight against all the Batussi. For this our strength is still not sufficient. However, in the future much will depend on what kind of a man from the old ruling dynasty succeeds the present weak puppet king, Mutaga, and what the attitude of our government to him will be.

643 The succession to the throne is determined by primogeniture
● 662 in Urundi, unless the king or the head chief decides otherwise. By law he is succeeded by the oldest son of his head wife. Usually, however, the king designates as his successor the one of his many sons who appears most suitable to him, and he bequeathes to him the insignia of royalty, i.e., the holy drum, his spear, and his arm ring. If this decision is made during the lifetime of the king, it is dangerous for the favored son. He will consider it advisable to escape from the jealousy of his brothers and relatives by taking refuge in some distant place until his time comes. If he is still a child, he is hidden by his mother far out of reach

643 of his relatives. However, the young prince who, according
662 to the belief of the Barundi, is destined to be king of Urundi also lives far from the court. The Barundi believe that this
[787] predestined royal child who has been born of one or another of the wives of the king can be recognized at birth by the fact that he holds in his hands seeds of all the species of produce grown in Urundi. They also believe that because of these revealing signs, the mother with her child flees to the neighboring country until the ruling king has died. A royal prince is regarded as suitable to succeed the king only if he is not yet married when ascending the throne and if his mother is still alive (p. 184 [not translated]). In any case there is a struggle between the various parties when the pretender to the throne returns from abroad after the king's death to lay claim to the succession. This ends with the victory [92] of one party and its pretender. The new ruler is proclaimed king after a ritual act of election (p. 184 [not translated]) by the council of the Baganwa and abafumu [plural of umufumu, sorcerer], and he usually has all his brothers and close relatives killed or sent into safe exile (No. 19, p. 524).

634 Less blood and violence is involved in the succession of the greater and lesser batwale. In this case, too, the father during his lifetime designates one of his sons as his successor by inheritance (or one of his daughter if he has no sons); usually it is the eldest. The king, however, may change the decision in favor of someone else. After the death of the chief, the new mutwale is ceremonially installed in his office by the council. He is given the insignia of the deceased and also the cattle, the wives, and the kraal of his predecessor; in short, he receives all his family property (No. 19, p. 550). He now proceeds to rule his new fiefdom like a sovereign prince, but he has to pay punctually to the king the tribute imposed on him, and he must also fulfill his other feudal duties which are not burdensome. Otherwise, he risks deposition, war, exile, and death.

631 These in turn would select their own assistants, who became "hill chiefs." The great chiefs, although they owned a number of dwellings in their respective districts, seldom lived among their people.

[662] Ever surrounded by jealous and often malevolent rivals, they were exposed to intrigues. Espionage and delation were endemic at court. This is why the great dignitaries remained by the king's side in order to guard against all eventualities.

643 Hamitic royalty, once it became powerful, immediately acquired great brilliance. United under a single scepter, the Banyarwanda became one of the best-organized Negro peoples and spread beyond their natural boundaries to defeat and subject to tribute the enemy nations around them. The union of the Bahutu clans took place thanks to the increasingly centralized administrative organization of the new inhabitants.

The Hamitic kings never lost the simplicity of their ancient mores. They kept up their interest in their herds of cattle, which they regularly asked to see, and they would ask and remember the names and genealogy of the animals. On the battlefields they were hardly distinguishable from their warriors, whose outfit and weapons they wore: a mere goatskin around the loins, a spear, a bow and arrows.

644 In peacetime, however, etiquette would elevate the monarch and isolate him from his subjects. One could not visit him without asking for an audience and being announced first. This was so at least as far as common people were concerned, for dignitaries and favorites acted with greater freedom and even took certain liberties. According to court protocol, one had /39/ to clap hands (gukom' amashi) when appearing before the monarch.

The "lords" would throng around him to fill out the government offices and to make up the court (1). Not only were princes of royal

1. "The Hamitic Court!" In dealing with the persons and times whose history we are describing, one must not think of the courts established in civilized countries. The Batutsi Court does not

644

resemble them much. It would be difficult, however, to call by another word the group of personages and servants who make up the entourage, followers, and retinue of these African potentates.

blood and dignitaries for the most part of Hamitic race and blood admitted to the court, but so were men whom the king introduced there directly. Among them were found, although in small numbers, commoners, foreigners, and even more rarely some Batwa whose status had been raised on account of their services or their skill in sorcery.

It was an art to arrive and to remain for them all.

644 The king inspired in his entourage a very humble respect mixed with a constant fear. Uncertainty as to what his dignified but slightly haughty manner held in store for them constantly worried these ambitious people.

662

They would, therefore, watch with apprehension the changes on his august face, which occasionally betrayed his most intimate feelings and his most sudden decisions, although most often it remained inscrutable.

A quick flash of wrath in his eyes portended disgrace and possibly death. A bright smile on his austere face caused radiant hopes to blossom.

These abrupt and capricious changes, which might dispose of one's future or even of one's life, constantly held souls in suspense between fear that makes one shudder and peace as refreshing as a breath of fresh air.

Yet, although one lived in anxious uncertainty, one tried to reassure oneself by saying that the king was too just to ignore virtue and honesty.... Although this integrity of the heart as expressed by words /40/ could strengthen the position of a courtier who had already arrived, however, how could it suffice to single out the aspiring courtier, whose qualities were hardly known as yet? In order to succeed, to find a patron willing to introduce a novice and sufficiently

644 enterprising to draw the king's glance and heart toward him, it was
662 sometimes necessary to arouse and maintain the protector's interest by way of attentions which might be more or less discreet, but which were always significant.

The gift you are offered broadens the path.
And leads you to the presence of the great.

When fortune was slow to smile, this was no cause for discouragement. There is an art of knowing how to wait.

But waiting does not mean inaction. A besieged city always ends up surrendering. One must undertake the siege of the king (1).

1. "La Cour royale et les classes sociales au temps de David et de Solomon /The Royal Court and Social Classes at the Time of David and Solomon/, " by Louis Desnoyers. (Correspondant, July 25, 1927.)

Patience costs ambitious people nothing, no matter how eager they may be to reach their goal. The chief occupation of the great and the parvenu was to dabble in politics, to plot intrigues, to flatter the king, and to increase their personal wealth. They owned lands and cattle, which they managed with care.

They followed the king on his moves so as not to lose his favor, so as to ward off the maneuvers of their enemies and profit from the crumbs that might fall from the royal table.

They would all make their way to the monarch, jolt each other to be near him and to have a choice place at his side.

Not one of them wished to leave.

They wanted to live at the capital, under the eyes of the master who dealt out influence and promotion. Court life and gossip were filled with the intrigues of the envious, with rivalries, "the bitter competition for power, the plots to win and keep favor, /41/ the treacherous insinuations of enemies who harried one another with hatred and decency /sic/, the brutal passions satisfied at any cost, "

644 with flagrant disgraces and the official executions that sometimes
662 resulted from them.

People became madly infatuated with everything abnormal or enigmatic, with the predictions of sorcerers, with ghosts, crimes, sudden or mysterious death.

And since the regular court attendants had a thorough knowledge of their neighbors' genealogy, past, history, acquaintances, and interests, it is easy to guess that the daily chronicle also concerned private quarrels, bereavements, marriages, and births. This was the usual pabulum of conversation. Similar in this respect to a certain French king who associated largely with lowly people, fortunetellers, astrologists, apothecaries, wig makers, and even the executioner, the Hamitic monarch also liked to surround himself with master cooks, archiaters, healers, magicians, and charlatans of all sorts to whom he occasionally distributed honors and appointments (1).

1. Some striking examples of those royal favors are known. Some subjects in most humble circumstances managed to obtain the hand of a Hamitic princess and to be raised to noble rank.

643 One can easily imagine what the royal administration was like
661 under the circumstances. No desire to encourage the arts, to favor agriculture, to improve the people's condition. The rights of the people exist theoretically, but they are regulated by no organic text and are too often dependent on the whims of royal and local power.

Infatuated with their own glory and exclusively preoccupied with their own pleasure, the sovereigns had no ambition other than to raise their prestige and to enjoy life.

The kings did not resemble one another from one reign to the next.

A warrior would succeed a peaceful man. Some, cruel and brutal, had the bloody whims and disordered passions of despots and degenerates. Others, of /42/ simpler tastes, led a peaceful existence and allowed the people to breathe.

9: Maquet E-5 (1949-1951) 1961 FO42 Rundi FO42

At the end of the nineteenth century the inzu had no collective rights over certain areas except in the north of Ruanda (Mulera, Rwankeri, Bushiru, Bigogwe) where the Tutsi occupation had been more superficial. I have been told that there the soil belonged to the patrilineage and that there was no land or cattle chief. From the point of view of the individual, however, the situation was very similar: he inherited a share of his father's tract. The difference was that, if the part were insufficient, he had to apply for more to the lineage head instead of to the land-chief, and a plot left without heirs returned to the patrilineage instead of the political authority.

The person entitled to the use of a plot could not sell his right but could let the tract. The rent was about one hoe every other year plus a jug of beer each harvest. The tenant was not permitted to settle by building a hut or planting banana trees.

The Twa resented very much the expansion of fields and pastures in the forests they regarded as their possession. The authority was not concerned with the way they divided it into hunting areas.[1]

2. RIGHTS OVER CATTLE

The rights over each head of cattle were also manifold. Property in the Western sense was split up into different aspects.

A global right existed over all Ruanda cattle, even sheep and goats, by which the king could claim actual possession of any of them. The mwami used this right more frequently, it seems, over cattle than over land. An important chief indulging in intrigues regarded as dangerous by the king might find himself dispossessed of all his cattle. The king's right over all the cattle of Ruanda was a constant threat which seems to have very effectively deterred the Tutsi of the ruling set from becoming too independent.

Another right was very similar to our bare ownership. The person who had it was not in possession of the cow but could at any time claim possession of the animal and the heifers and cows produced by that beast since the time when the possession had been transferred. This was the right of the lord (*shebuja*).

In contrast there was the usufruct right with respect to cattle. The person endowed with it could dispose of the milk, the male increase of the cattle, and the dead cows. This was the typical right of the client (*garagu*).

[1] For a more extended account of the land tenure system in traditional Ruanda, see Maquet and Naigiziki, 1957.

9:Maquet E-5 (1949-1951)1961 FO42 Rundi FO42

made for certain guarantees. For the *buhake* services, what each client had to give or do was less clearly determined and depended more on the *shebuja*'s wishes. There were also in that sphere, however, some traditionally admitted limits.

Universality and regulation of dues as such do not prevent the exactions committed by socially powerful individuals and those who required payment of taxes were powerful. Another more efficient obstacle to an exaggerated exploitation was the fact that the political and clientage structures gave to any individual of ability the opportunity to secure for himself a defender and a protector. This opportunity resulted from the plural character of the Ruanda hierarchy.

When one belongs to a single structure, there is only one immediate superior. Consequently, everything must be obtained from him and is owed to him. In a plural system, there are several immediate superiors of approximately equal rank and who are not interdependent. Consequently, it is possible to have the support of one chief (or his complicity even) when resisting another.

This is what happened in Ruanda. An example will show how the plurality of chiefs could be used. Suppose a Hutu had inherited cattle granted by a lord to his grandfather who had also received cows from his army-chief, and who had acquired other cattle by exchange of goods (*imbata*), and because his present lord was too exacting, our Hutu wanted to change and become the client of another important man. He knew that his lord would try to seize all his *imbata* and to choose the best cows among his other cattle. By some gifts, he obtained the support of his army-chief. Before entering into discussion with his lord, he and his army-chief had agreed that all the best cows he had at his disposal and all his *imbata* would be said to have been received from the military chief. They were removed and put on grazing grounds directly protected by the army-chief. Then when the lord claimed more cows than his client wanted to return to him, he had to settle the matter not with a man of very limited power but with the army-chief.

Of course this required clever handling of the situation, but when it succeeded it secured efficient protection against extortion.

It should be added that the recourse of a subject to a higher authority within the same hierarchy was approved and even encouraged in Ruanda. This was another means of putting a check on the exorbitant demands of immediate superiors. This, however,

9:Maquet E-5 (1949-1951) 1961 F.042 Rundi F042

did not play an important part in the feudal system because there were no socially recognized ties between a client and his lord's lord. Feudality was not a ranking system in the same sense as were the political structures. Each lord had his personal following; he was not as such the representative of a higher authority.

To sum up, the political and clientage structures at the same time secured the economic exploitation of the Hutu and protected them against an exaggerated pressure which could have led to disaster for the upper caste.

(c) Delegation and centralization of political power

Before the European occupation the kingdom's population was already numerous, probably around 1,700,000 inhabitants. The orographic configuration of the country made communications rather difficult. In that non-literate culture, an efficient collection of tributes required almost a face to face acquaintance between the subject and his ruler. These circumstances necessitated a delegation of authority to many intermediary chiefs who would be the local representatives of the rulers.

But such an unavoidable system was very dangerous for the central government. Its subordinated agents having frequently authority over a rather numerous population which could provide them with abundant supplies (if nothing was sent to the court) could be tempted to isolate themselves completely from the capital and become independent. Such a course of action would have been facilitated by the military structure and the feudal system.

Some important chiefs were, indeed, authorized to raise an army. Moreover, any military chief whose army was encamped near the border, in a district far from the capital, could gain such ascendancy over his warriors as to win over their allegiance to himself.

The *buhake* was perhaps still more dangerous because, as in any feudal system, it created personal bonds of allegiance between the client and his lord. As such, that bond of loyalty did not extend beyond the lord. One had to obey one's lord because he was one's lord and not because he was a mwami's representative. This is why any feudal system has always been so dangerous for a central government. Independence and revolt against the king have been recurring events in the areas where a feudal system existed.

Rwanda rulers were able to check successfully these tendencies

10:Albert E-5 (1956-1957)1963
FO42 Rundi FO42

ever she does, she does within the limits of her various feminine roles. However, the obligations of motherhood, of the household and of wifehood hardly prevent a woman from participating in other activities. Indeed, in Burundi, everyone is busy with politics —the large scale politics of the kingdom for the *abakuru*, the great ones, and the petty politics of daily life for the *abatoyi*, the humble folk. Women are not less interested in it than men, nor peasants less than princes. A peasant widow plays politics to obtain a length of cotton cloth or to protect against her enemies her rights to her little plot of cultivable land. A princess plays politics to obtain jewellery and cows and to decide a princely succession. A woman is sometimes driven by ambition for the sake of her son; sometimes it is to her advantage to help her husband; sometimes she enters the game entirely in her own interest. Peasant or princess, if a Rundikazi understands and desires happiness, if she knows how to dominate men in all subtlety, if she is clever and courageous, she may even defeat her own father or husband in the political game. The ambition of a Rundi or Rundikazi of inferior birth is seriously limited by the restrictive rules of the caste system. However, the ambition of a woman as such encounters only the sometimes purely apparent obstacle of a patriarchal, patrilineal system in which all the legitimate titles to wealth and power are for men.[4] Women who are ambitious and intelligent do not seem to be at a disadvantage in having to function in politics by indirect means and in secret. These are, in any case, the preferred methods of men in the delicate business of increasing power and wealth.

Thus, in Burundi as elsewhere, one finds charming but formidable matriarchs who have considerable authority and who are perhaps more intimidating than the harshest of patriarchs. On the other hand, most of the women of Burundi never even approach realization of the central values of the society. They must work to the limit of their strength so that they will not die of hunger. This is because most Rundi are of the inferior castes, where men and women share the wretchedness of the poor. It would be vain to try to calculate the difference between the misery of a man and that of a woman, if both of them are of inferior birth, without relatives or a feudal protector, old, weak and not very bright.

Neither a Rundikazi who wields great political influence nor a man of low caste who has more political power and wealth than his social superior is regarded as an outlaw. On the contrary, they are looked upon as clever and lucky. The social structure of Burundi, like that of other societies, does not describe behaviour. It only serves as a guide. A society would be crushed by the weight of

10:Albert E-5 (1956-1957)1963
FO42 Rundi FO42

manager is indispensable to a wealthy man, for he has many feudal vassals, serfs, cows and lands. A woman of a powerful and wealthy patrilineage can be of great assistance to her husband in the matter of forming useful political alliances. The wife will probably have considerable influence with her brothers and perhaps also with her father.

The higher the social status of a woman, the higher will be the social status of her husband, and hence the higher the status of the visitors she entertains. In her role as hostess, a clever woman can profit very materially from the visits of her husband's friends and superiors. If she knows she pleases them, she will do them the honour of asking them for cows and other gifts. If her favourite son is ready to take his place in the world, she will look around among the visitors for a likely prospect of whom her son can ask a cow, if it is a family where the traditional values still prevail, or of whom he can ask for a job, if the son has been trained in European schools. In addition, the fair name of a man among his friends depends in no small measure upon the magnificence of the hospitality provided in his home by his wife and upon the gossip that circulates between the visitors and the wife. If a woman is satisfied with her husband, she will see to it that visitors have a good impression of the man. She will find ways to get information to gauge the friendliness of the visitors towards her husband. She will recognize his enemies and know how to defeat them. If she hears from the visitors that there are rumours to the effect that her husband is no longer loyal to his superior, that he does not take care of the cows which his superior has given him, that he will soon be removed from his position and his wealth taken away from him, she will probably seek means to save him, since his downfall will also be hers. However, if the husband is not clever, if he has not been generous, and if the wife sees a way to move to a more favourable position in another marriage, she will risk adding her calumny to the rest. It does not happen often, but when a woman has succeeded in ruining her husband, men talk about it for a long, long time. A mature woman prefers to stay with her husband and then, as a widow, with her favourite son. Among the men with whom she is in contact—her father, her brothers, her husband, her brothers-in-law, her cousins, her sons, and her visitors—an intelligent woman will certainly find a few who are generous and obliging and through whom she can obtain the wealth and power that she desires.

In all this, it is not to be forgotten that a woman is the inferior of her husband and of his distinguished visitors. To get what is wanted, an inferior must know how to please superiors, unfailingly